

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 2706

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**As Passed House:**  
February 13, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to requiring a more rigorous curriculum for high school graduation.

**Brief Description:** Regarding a more rigorous curriculum for high school graduation.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Hunter, Sommers, Tom, Anderson, Talcott, Quall, McIntire, Dunn, Green, Kenney and Lantz).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 1/26/06, 2/2/06 [DPS].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/13/06, 96-2.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**

- Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2008-09, requires three years of mathematics with specified content for high school graduation.
- Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2012-13, requires four years of mathematics with specified content for high school graduation.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Shabro, Tom, and Wallace.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Santos.

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383).

**Background:**

The State Board of Education (SBE) is charged with adopting statewide high school graduation requirements. The current SBE rules require a student to accumulate 19 credits in the following course content areas:

- English - 3 credits

- Math - 2 credits
- Science - 2 credits, including 1 credit of laboratory science
- Social Studies - 2.5 credits
- Health and Fitness - 2 credits
- Arts (visual or performing) - 1 credit
- Occupational Education - 1 credit
- Electives - 5.5 credits

Local school districts can adopt additional courses or other requirements.

A number of national organizations, including the American Diploma Project (ADP) and the National Governor's Association, have recommended that states encourage higher standards for high school graduation. The ADP recommends that all students be required to take a college and workplace readiness curriculum that is defined by specific, challenging core content.

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**Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:**

Beginning with the class of students entering ninth grade in 2008-09, state graduation requirements adopted by the SBE must include three years of mathematics including at least Algebra I and Geometry.

Beginning with the class of students entering ninth grade in 2012-13, state graduation requirements must include four years of mathematics including at least Algebra II, Geometry, and a higher-level mathematics course designed to prepare students for postsecondary study without remediation.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** (In support) We must think about how to prepare children for their future and our future. To earn an income that increases rather than decreases over time, students must have educational experience after high school. We cannot wander along with the same graduation requirements as 100 years ago. There are 22 other states increasing their graduation requirements. This is very timely in terms of the global marketplace. We have a two-tiered graduation system now; no one tells high school students that it is in their best interest to pursue college preparatory coursework from the beginning. Unless students have parents who push them in this direction, they are left behind. The level of math and science needed is at the college preparatory level. We need to "send the memo" to the K-12 system that the world has changed.

(With concerns) High expectations and rigor should be supported. It is wonderful to propose alignment between college and work expectations and high school graduation, but how will the educational system be able to support this proposal? Is there capacity? Are the teachers ready and do they exist? This has the potential to create a two-tiered diploma and educational system.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Hunter, prime sponsor; Marc Frazer, Washington State Roundtable; Michele Anciant Aoki, Washington State Coalition for International Education; and Lisa MacFarlane, League of Education Voters.

(With concerns) Scott Allen, Washington State Parent Teacher Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.